# A GENERAL EPISTLE

And a tender Greeting, ſent unto the

# Flock of Chriſt;

## Who meet together, to Worſhip the Father and the Son in the Spirit of Truth; to be read in the fear and wiſdom of God, amongſt them.

DEar and tenderly beloved Friends, and Children of the moſt high God, who have felt and taſted of his eternall Word of Life, and have been acquainted with the workings and opperations thereof, whereby you are begotten again unto a lively hope, and are brought to know that life, which you were alienated from, and that Covenant of Promiſe, which ye were ſtrangers unto. Oh Friends! unto you is my love in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt exceeding great, and for you do I oft pray to the Father of life, that ye may be kept ſtedfaſt in that life, which ye haue felt and taſted of, and that nothing may move you from that hope and confidence, which God hath begotten in you by the working of his mighty power: Oh dear Babes! let the love of our God break and melt you into the meek tender ſpirit of the Lamb, and let the conſideration of his mercy and grace, which to you he hath ſhewn, overcome you and make you ſick of love: Oh how can I expreſs his goodneſs, for it is beyond utterance! yea, his loving kindneſs to you-ward hath been exceeding large, who in an acceptable time hath appeared and viſited you with his tender love, the Light of the world; and by his unreſiſtable power hath he cau-

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ſed you to feel the day ſpring from on high, even the breaking forth of light in your hearts and inward parts; yea, this did he do for you, who were as ſheep without a Shepherd, ſcattered upon the Mountains in the cloudy and dark day: Oh Friends! how did his love reach unto you, when ye were enemies unto him? how plainly did he ſhew unto you the evil of your wayes, which had ſeperated you from his preſence? and how tenderly did he hold forth his hand of love, to lead you out of that which had made you miſerable? and how did he give you ſtrength to walk when ye were lame, and inclined your hearts after that which he ſhewed unto you to be good? and how did he manifeſt his eternal power and righteous judgment in you, againſt the body of ſin? and how did he beget and quicken a righteous ſeed in you, which cannot live but in his preſence? and how mightily hath he opened the eye of your underſtandings, by his eternal ſpirit, that ye are brought to ſee the falſe wayes and worſhips of the world, wherein ye were once intangled; and he hath alſo given you to ſee the way to himſelf, and the worſhip which he regards, in the ſpirit of truth: wherein you are come to know that which only can give ſatisfaction, and make you eternally free: Oh let the unexpreſſable love of the Father never be forgoten by you, my dear friends! but all keep to, and dwell in, that eternal immortal power of an endleſs life, which ye have felt and taſted of; and let your minds be kept to the workings and operations of the ſame, that ſo none of you may be daunted by the enemy within or without, but all wait in the eternal Light, the foundation of God, which can never be ſhaken, that ſo your minds may be girded up, and you kept upon your watch, and your ear kept open to the Lord, that ſo when he calls ye may anſwer, and when he teaches, yea may obſerve and obey, that ſo your ſouls may live; and that he may ſee his eternal will in all conditions, and be contented therewithal, then will you feel the peace which none can take away: And friends, give all diligence to obey the word of wiſdome, that ye may be known to be its Children, and that ye may feel, and witneſs your growth into the nature of the immortal ſeed, whoſe Kingdome is not of this world; that ſo your redemption from the earth, and all earthly things you may know, through the blood of the unſpoted Lamb of God; which blood is the life which he gave a ranſom for many, which life is manifeſted in your mortal bodies, that through faith in it ye may be ſaved.

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And know this my Friends, henceforth you are not your own, for you are bought with price, and you are called with an holy calling, that you might glorifie the Lord in your bodies and ſpirits which are the Lords: Oh my Friends! let not your delight be placed in the things of this world, for then will you be intangled, but wait in the feeling of the pure power of the Lord God, that ye may be kept and preſerved thereby, that ſo yee that marry may be as if you married not, and that ye that have of this world, as if ye poſſeſſed not, and that ye may be kept in the living wiſdome of God, in the ordering of all things that are given unto you, that ſo the glory of God, and the honour of his Eternall Truth, may be minded in all things; and that your minds and hearts may be drawn out of all created things, and ye kept ſingle and chaſt unto the Lord, that ſo, if it were his will, that ye ſhould be ſeperated either from Wife, or Husband (outwardly) or Children, or Houſes, or Lands, or and outward thing for his name ſake, that ye may be kept in that temper and frame of mind and ſpirit, that ye may reſigne up all freely without murmuring, that ſo ye may be known to be followers of the Lamb, whitherſoever he goeth, for my babes it is given unto you, as well to ſuffer for his names ſake as to believe, and hereby ſhall the world know that ye are redeemed from the earth, if ye in patience and innocency give up to the will of God in all things: Therefore dear hearts, wait in the power and life of God, that ye may feel your ſtrength and courage and boldneſs for the Lord increaſed, that when you are tryed, ye may ſtand in that ſpirit of life and meekneſs, which will give you eternal peace, in all your ſufferings and tryalls, for the Lord will try you, that ye may ſee, and know him alone to be your ſtrength, and that the world may know, that ye are a people ſaved by the almighty God; and this know, that ye that are faithfull, ſhall not be proved beyond your ſtrength, for the Lord will be with you in all your tryals, and the more that you are perſecuted for his name, the greater ſhal his power be felt in you, and the more your enemies afflict you, the greater ſhall be your joy, and this ſhall torment your enemies: So friends, let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire wanting nothing, for the Lord will make up his Jewels, and he will take away all the droſs, and nothing ſhall remain, but that which will abide the tryal in the fire, for the Lord hath been loathed with the ſacrifices of many, who have profeſſed his name, but have not

been ſubject to the leadings of his Spirit, but have grived it from day to day; Therefore will the Lord God try all profeſſions, and the chaffe ſhall be blown away, and all falſe coverings ſhall be ſtript off, and men ſhall appear as they are; yea the chaffe which ſome time ſeemed to joyn to the wheat, ſhall be driven to and fro, untill the fire conſume it, or untill, it mix it ſelf with the mire where the ſwine walloweth; but God will have regard unto his ſeed which is weighty: And friends, a day of calamity will come upon them, who have worſhiped, and do worſhip an unknown God at a diſtance, and pretend the worſhip of the true God, for they ſhall call, but their God ſhall not anſwer, and they ſhall fret themſelves, & fear and terror ſhall ſieze upon them, & many ſhall joyn to, and fall under that, which they have called and eſteemed Babiloniſh: But there is a Remnant yet to be gathered, both from among the profeſſors and prophane: Therefore dear hearts, let your circumſpect walking in the life of Righteouſneſs, reach the witneſſe of God in all conſciences, and let your ſoberneſs and patience ſmite your enemies. And you that are ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, are able to endure much, bear ye with the weak, and incourage and ſtrengthen the feeble, and let your tender love and care be over ſuch, as ye feel have true breathings after the Lord, though they have had little of a knowledge of the declaration of truth; and let your words to, and before them and all men, be ſeaſoned with grace, that ye may miniſter unto the grace in the hearers.

And ye that are weak, and yet have a true Love begotten in you towards the Lord; all wait in the feeling of the truth in your inward parts, that your minds may be wrought into ſubjection to the Lord, through the working of his eternal power in you: and when you are tempted, heed not the temptation, but heed the Light that makes manifeſt the temptation, and believe in the Light and keep to it, and ye will feel the Lords preſence and ſtrength breaking forth to deliver you, and to make a way for you to eſcape the temptation; and if at any time ye be overcome by the ſubtilty of the Devil, and then the Light ariſe in you, to make manifeſt the tranſgreſſion, and to Judge you for it, then joyn to the Light, and love the judgement, and will not, but be ſtill, until it works through, and breaks forth into victory; and if ye ſee iniquity abound; then take heed that your love wax not cold; and if ye ſee ſome fall

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from the truth, and turn back with the dogg to the vomit, and with the Swine that was waſhed, to the wallowing again in the mire; aud if yee ſee ſome for fear of perſecution ſtart aſide, or for the love of this world depart from the faith, or turn from the holy Comandment, which was delivered unto them upon any account whatſoever; let none of theſe things move or trouble you, for ſuch things will come to paſs; but bleſſed are they that are not offended with the Light, but ſuffers and endures all things unto the end, for they ſhall be ſaved: But this know friends, that the Lord God will try you, and ye muſt paſs through perils and tryals, not only among the open prophane ones, but alſo among ſuch as have known the truth, and turns from it; yet know my friends, that God will not not try you further than he will give you ſtrength to endure the tryal, if ye be faithful unto him. Therefore watch and be ſober, and wait in the life, that ye may have ſalt in your ſelves to ſavor withal; and be not weary, neither faint in your minds, nor let not in diſtruſt, but hope to the end, and be confident that God will appear and work deliverance for his people; but if it be his will that ye muſt yet be further tryed, and that he will yet ſuffer the wicked to flouriſh, & ſpread forth themſelves as a green bay-tree, and that ye muſt yet bear your teſtimony for the Lord by greater ſufferings; Oh friends murmur not! but hold faſt your integrity, and know certainly, that whatſoever any ſuffer for the Lord, they ſhall not looſe their reward: Therefore all friends, be valiant and ſtrong, and bold for the truth upon earth; and walk humbly with the Lord, and wiſely before your enemies, that ſo, ye by doing the thing that is right in the ſight of God, may put to ſilence the fooliſh and ignorant, for this is the will of God. And friends, walk patiently towards all men, knowing that ye ſometimes were ignorant and fooliſh, and diſobedient; therefore let your pitty and patience towards them (that be diſobedient) be known, and wait that ye may be ready to ſhew them the thing that is good, & to inſtruct them concerning the way of righteouſneſſe, or if you have not words given you, then let your converſation preach forth righteouſneſs, that ſo happily God may give ſome of them repentance, and that ye may be made inſtruments for the bringing them unto the acknowledgement and knowledge of the truth; and live in the wiſdome and power of God, that ſo your enemies may haue nothing againſt you juſtly, but if they will perſecute you for any thing appertaining;

pertaining to a good conſcience, be not diſmaid; or if they falſely accuſe you, and falſely ſweare againſt you, and ſo ye reckoned among the tranſgreſſors by them, be not troubled, but be patient and keep to the witneſſe of God; for thus the wicked ſerved your Maſter, who gave his back to the ſmiter, and his cheeks unto them that plucked off the hair, and the ſervant is not greater than his Lord: So let nothing be too dear to be given up for the Lord, and bow not to any thing, but to the name of Jeſus, whoſe name is called the word of God, by which we muſt overcome and break through all this ungodlineſs: Oh the Lord keep you faithfull and patient in your tryals, for much have we to paſſe through and to overcome, through the patience and long-ſuffering of the Lamb: So let none be exalted above their meaſures, nor caſt down by letting in of fears, but all dwell in the living Nobility of the Immortal King of Righteouſneſs, and keep in ſubjection to his government, and meet together oft in his name, though the Sea and the Heathen Rage, and the people imagin vain things, and though the Kings of the earth, and the Rulers riſe up together, and take counſell againſt the Lamb, and his followers; and though the rude multitude may perſecute you, and the whore may drink ſome of your blood, yet be not diſmaid, neither fear ye at all, for in vain do they ſtrive, for the Lamb ſhall get the victory; glory to him in the higheſt.

And ſo friends, keep your garments unſpotted, ye, who have waſhed them in the blood of the Lamb, and be exceeding tender toward ſuch profeſſors as have a tenderneſs in them towards God, in what Sect ſoever they be in, for poor creatures they are to be pittied, and the way of truth is to be ſhewn unto them, and this day will bring ſome of them unto the principle of God in themſelves, and they muſt come unto that, before they can find a true ſtay to their minds; and them that comes not to that and keeps not to that, will wither as the graſs upon the houſe top. Oh friends! I can even rejoyce and ſing for joy, notwithſtanding the rage and ſtrength of the enemies, for I ſee the day that approacheth will be exceeding good for truth, and for friends that dwell in it; for they that ſtand approved ſhall be made manifeſt, and the upright ſhall not looſe, but again through all theſe things; and certainly, when our God hath tryed us to the full, he will appear for us; and though our enemies were as the ſand of the Sea, and as

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ſtrong as Gyants, yet ſhall they fall as untimely fruit, and our God ſhall conſume and weaken them by the majeſty of his power, and an exceeding deſolation ſhall come upon the earth, and a beeſome of deſtruction ſhall ſweep away many.

Therefore dear hearts, be ſtedfaſt in the Lord, and keep the word of his patience, and know, that not one hair of your heads ſhall periſh, nor any thing ſhall be done unto any of you, but what the Lord will be glorified by, and you ſhall receive a full and a ſufficient reward for it, if ye continue faithfull; So live in the power and ſeed of God, that ye may poſſeſs the kingdome, the eternal peace, joy and righteouſneſs, which ſtands in the power: And love fervently, Oh friends, let that abound more and more one towards another, and by this ſhall men alſo know, that ye are taught of Chriſt, if ye love one another; and wait that ye may feel the ſprings of life in your ſelves, and feed upon that which proceeds from God, that ye may grow up in the power and life, and wiſdome of God, and therein be eſtabliſhed: So the almighty power, life and wiſdome of God, keep and preſerve you for ever Amen; the Lord God almighty keep you freſh and lively, meek, tender, and innocent, and fill you with every good word, and work, which accompanieth peace, and godlineſſe; If any Decree unrighteous Decrees, heed them not, for the Decree of God ſhall ſtand, which is, to eſtabliſh righteouſneſs in the earth, and in the power of the Lord, we ſhall break the bonds of the ungodly, and caſt their cords from us; So the ſpirituall weapon war withall, and ſtand in the faith, and hold faſt the word of truth, that through it you may feel and witneſs your ſanctification, and the birth immortall raiſed up over all, which is the heir of the Kingdome without end, and aſſuredly God will do mighty things for his people; therefore be ye comforted and ſtrengthened in the Lord, and dwell in and keep his covenant, and anſwer his requirings in the Light of life, and live in the retiredneſs, and in the wiſdome of God, that your enemies may have no juſt occaſion againſt you, and that ye may be preſerved out of their ſnares, and if they impriſon you, and falſely accuſe you, or ſpoil your goods, or perſecute you any manner of wayes, keep in patience, and freely forgive them, and ſuffer as Lambs in the true innocency, that ſo your peace with the Lord may be preſerved in all conditions.

*And Friends, let the Dread and Majesty of God fill you, and as concerning the changing of Times and Governments; let not that trouble any of you, for God hath a mighty work, and hand therein; and he will yet change again untill that come up, which must Reign; and in vain shall Powers and Armies withstand the Lord, for his determined work shall come to pass; but what is now come up, it's just with the Lord that it should be so, and he will be served by it: Therefore let none murmure, nor distrust God, for God will provoke many to zeal against unrighteousness, and for righteousness, through things which are suffered now to work for a season; yea many whose zeal was even dead, shall revive again, and they shall see their backslidings, and bewail them bitterly, and God shall thunder down from heaven, and break forth in a mighty noise, and his Enemies shall be astonished, and the workers of Iniquity confounded, and all that have not on the garment of righteosness, shall be amazed at the mighty and strange work of the Lord, which shall be certainly brought to pass; but my Babes look ye not out, but be still in the Light of the Lamb, and he shall fight for you: So the Almighty hand which must Break, and Split, and Divide your enemies, and take away peace from them, preserve and keep you whole, and in unity, and in peace with it self, and one with another.*

*Lambeth House* the third day of the 4th. moneth 1660.

*I am your Dear Friend and Brother in the Kingdome and patience of Christ, who am a Prisoner for his testimony, and keep his word, and am made as willing to suffer bonds, or to die for his name, as to declare and publish it amongst men; eternal living praises, and hallelujahs over all, be unto him for evermore,* Amen.

George Fox, *the Younger.*

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## The End.

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*LONDON*, Printed for *Robert Wilson*, at the sign of the *Black-spread Eagle* and *Windmill*, in *Martins* near *Aldersgate*, 1660.

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